



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Board of Nursing

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ADVISORY OPINION # 48

FORMULATED: March 2004

REVISED: November 2012

REVIEWED July 2007, May 2006, July 2005

QUESTION: Is it within the scope of practice of the Registered Nurse (RN) to remove trans-thoracic (epicardial) pacing wire following open-heart surgery?

The Board of Nursing acknowledges that it is within the role and scope of responsibilities of the RN to remove trans-thoracic (epicardial) pacing wires following open-heart surgery as ordered by the physician.

The Board recognizes this responsibility is an additional act for the RN and requires the following guidelines:

1. If the nursing department determines that implementation is in order, the appropriate policies, procedures, and protocols should be developed. Protocols must specify qualifications, special education, and training regarding the role of the selected RN to include didactic and clinical competencies.
2. The procedure is performed only in a medical facility where a cardiothoracic surgeon is present within the facility during the procedure and for one hour following the procedure should complications arise.

This statement is an advisory opinion of the Board of Nursing as to what constitutes competent and safe nursing practice.